

Book Reviews

The Western Journal of Medicine does not review all books sent by publishers, although information about new books received is printed elsewhere in the journal as space permits. Prices quoted are those given by the publishers.

BASIC & CLINICAL ENDOCRINOLOGY—Edited by Francis S. Greenspan, MD, Clinical Professor of Medicine and Radiology, Dept of Medicine, and Chief, Thyroid Clinic, University of California, San Francisco; and Peter H. Forsham, MD, Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics, University of California, San Francisco. Lange Medical Publications, Drawer L, Los Altos, CA 94022, 1983. 625 pages, \$25.00 (softbound).

The editors have assembled a group of well-known basic and clinical endocrinologists, all of whom are experts in their respective fields. These authors have written an exciting textbook of endocrinology. The style of the book is geared towards facilitating clear and accurate learning. Each chapter is replete with original diagrams, charts and clinical photographs, as well as the best classical illustrations culled from other published works. The result is that each chapter presents a comprehensive overview of basic physiological and cellular mechanisms of hormone secretion and action. This is followed by well-written sections on clinical presentations, diagnosis and management of endocrine disorders. This results in a well-balanced application of basic science to clinical medicine.

The chapters cover all aspects of endocrine and metabolic physiology and disease states. They range from clear descriptions of general principles of hormone secretion and action through coverage of all the endocrine glands. The chapter on thyroid disorders stands out as a beautiful presentation of complex, basic science and clinical thyroidology. The sections explaining free thyroid hormone levels and interpretation of thyroid hormone levels in sick patients are especially clear and remove the confusion which often faces medical students and practitioners in this area. The sections on adrenal disorders, testes, sexual differentiation and development, and carbohydrate metabolism are undoubtedly superb state-of-the-art endocrinology. Each of the other chapters is written in the same clear concise and accurate style.

The book is extremely readable and will prove to be an excellent learning tool. The authors have succeeded in providing a basic and clinical endocrine text which is on the one hand comprehensive yet succinct, and on the other hand not laborious or long. This book will be welcomed by medical students, residents and all practitioners in the fields of internal medicine, gynecology and obstetrics, neurology and urology, as well as practicing and academic endocrinologists.

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ECHOCARDIOGRAPHIC DIAGNOSIS—DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS OF M-MODE AND TWO-DIMENSIONAL ECHOGRAPHIC APPEARANCES—Ivan A. D'Cruz, MD, FACC, FRCP(Edin), MRCP(Lond), Director, Echocardiography Section, and Attending Physician, Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center, Chicago, and Associate Professor of Medicine, University of Chicago, Pritzker School of Medicine. Macmillan Publishing Company, 866 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022, 1983. 434 pages, \$49.95.

Texts providing a basic foundation of echocardiographic principles have been readily accessible for a number of years; a fresh new approach being more than welcome. On reading *Echocardiographic Diagnosis*, by Ivan D'Cruz, one receives that welcome surprise.

For those accustomed to continuity in reading, D'Cruz's

book may be a bit confining in style as it is organized (as advertised) with a strong emphasis on outline format. This is somewhat prerequisite since the orientation of the book is toward differential diagnosis rather than toward in-depth pathophysiologic explanations of individual disease processes where notes on imaging are sometimes a secondary consideration. *Echocardiographic Diagnosis* recapitulates the differential diagnosis approach, the technique we as physicians use every day, and thereby facilitates and fine tunes basic diagnostic principles learned elsewhere with respect to two-dimensional and M-mode appearances. There is a conspicuous absence of standard appendices of measurements present in most echocardiographic texts, although the information is included, and one may long for such a section for quick reference while perusing the text. However, this is not a basic echocardiographic reference.

Accompanying many sections on differential diagnosis is also the very nice addition of a section on common pitfalls in differential diagnosis, or common mistakes that may be made while establishing a narrower differential diagnosis. In other words, D'Cruz explains how to avoid the bugaboos in diagnosis. This, in itself, also functions as a helpful reinforcement of the preceding material learned. Nearly every important statement in D'Cruz's text is comprehensively referenced, leaving no question as to its origin or validity. Echocardiographic entities are demonstrated with excellent quality strip chart recordings and although the two-dimensional images are good, they fall victim to the slight but ever present degradation inherent in freeze-frame reproductions. In instances where the two-dimensional finding is subtle, D'Cruz does not hesitate in the timely use of diagrams to facilitate the echographic interpretation.

Finally, D'Cruz's text is a pleasure to read and its outline type organization makes learning of information easier. It will add useful information and references to the repertoire of any physician who practices echocardiography.

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WHY NOT SAY IT CLEARLY. A GUIDE TO SCIENTIFIC WRITING—Lester S. King, MD. Little, Brown & Company, 34 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02106, 1978. \$10.95.

This little book, written by the former senior editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, is now, deservedly, in its fourth printing. There is good reason for its popularity. Dr King has sound advice not only for scientific writers but for all who want to improve their skills in expository writing.

He states his purpose on the jacket of the book: "I want to induce in the reader the ability to discriminate good writing from bad, to develop a gut reaction against whatever is clumsy and unclear, to identify specific factors that make bad writing bad, and then to effect improvement."

If these noble intentions apply to any of us (and who would not want to improve his writing ability?) then this gem of a book is a worthwhile investment.

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